ORAL HISTORY OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

INTERVIEWS WITH

J. HERMAN DAVES

BY - CHARLES W. CRAWFORD

TRANSCRIBER - BETTY WILLIAMS

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

INTERVIEWS WITH J. HERMAN DAVES

FEBRUARY 13, 1972

BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD

TRANSCRIBER - BETTY WILLIAMS

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

I hereby release all right, title, or interest in and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the Mississippi Valley Archives of the John Willard Brister Library of Memphis State University and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and published by the said Archives, which also may assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars.

PLACE Knoxville, Tenn.

DATE Feb. 13, ~~1971~~ 1972

J. H. Daves
(Interviewee) J. Herman Daves

Charles W. Crawford
(For the Mississippi Valley Archives of the John Willard Brister Library of Memphis State University)

(CHRO Form B)

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THE PROJECT IS "AN ORAL HISTORY OF TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY." THE DATE IS FEBRUARY 13, 1972. THE PLACE IS KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. J. HERMAN DAVES. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW I.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suggest Mr. Daves, that we start with some personal background at the beginning. Tell something of when and where you were born and go through your experience and education up through to when you came with TVA. Then in whatever summary or outline you want we'll get into [your work with TVA].

MR. DAVES: I was born in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and my secondary education was in Rocky Mount. I came to Knoxville to attend Knoxville College and graduated with an A.B. degree. I then went to Buffalo, New York, and attended the University of Buffalo where I received a Master's degree in sociology and economics. From there I came back to Knoxville to teach at the Knoxville College as head of the Department of Sociology and Economics from 1930-1939. Then I went to the University of Wisconsin where I worked on my doctor's degree in sociology and economics in 1934-35 and 1935-36. I completed my residential requirements for a Ph.D. degree. I did not finish my dissertation because I was out on the field working on it. I did pass my prelims and I got a call to come to TVA.

I have a wife and three children and finances were getting low so I said I would work for TVA for a couple of years and then go back and finish my research project. I never got there! I worked for TVA continuously from 1939 until the fall of 1963.

My first connection with TVA was as a Supervisor of Negro Education in the Department of Personnel and in the branch of Education Relations. My responsibility in this position was to help formulate a program of training and adult education for employees of TVA, particularly out in the construction areas of the various dams in the different states.

There we had a construction project going and we employed several hundred people. We established a village, housing, schools, recreation and adult education. Many of the employees were not able to read and write, understandably, so we did have instructors to carry on adult education in the evenings after work hours. We also established schools because families would move in with children and sometimes the project would be too far away from the town or from the existing schools.

So we had to employ teachers and I was supervising that for these chiefly elementary/high school children. This continued for all of the project and I traveled in seven states throughout the Valley supervising this type of work. We had people, of course, in the projects in the area to carry on this type of work and I was supervising it. We tried to evaluate the services. This was similar to but not as extensive as the Norris community. Norris was the first community that TVA had that had its own school system. [It had] its own housing for employees that lived in

Knoxville and were commuting back and forth to Norris.

Eventually, Congress was supposed to impress the real estate people and insist upon TVA disposing of all of its schools that they thought were in competition with the school system of some counties in which the project may be located. Since we were paying the teachers possibly much higher salaries than the local communities were paying, and since we had a little better building, better equipment and better facilities, there was jealousy on the part of the local superintendents that TVA (chuckle) was making it very difficult for them to compete with them.

So what happened then was, we had to close down unless it was a good distance [to the next school] out away from it. We could bus the children to a nearby school.

Since we were interested in improving the education for the children of our employees, we were subsidized in a particular county school with library books and with facilities and materials that they did not have. And we tried to provide assistance to the teachers with summer workshops and so on that they may improve themselves that they might be able to do a better job as teachers since our children were in those schools.

As this program developed we went into an area of assisting all of the schools in the Valley through what we called Resource Use Education. Dr. John Ivey headed up this branch. He was formerly connected with the University of North Carolina and even before he came to TVA he developed workshops in resource use education and would bring the teachers as well as TVA people interested in this phase of education to Chapel Hill or they would

go to Tuskegee or would go to Auburn, Alabama, and other places where they could bring in the teachers and try to get them to understand what TVA's educational interests were.

The schools in the area of the Valley would be able to improve the, I guess, image of TVA through the people understanding what TVA was doing. In order to do this we had to get a memorandum of understanding with each state department of education of the seven states which would allow us to work with not only the school system of the county or the city, but with the teacher training institutions across the Valley or the seven states in particular.

I don't think they limited that to the Valley states, but wherever we could we tried through the teacher training colleges to turn out teachers with a better knowledge of resource development in the Valley or even in the Southeast.

So we did that for several years and when we began to evaluate it, we found out that it was very difficult to get teachers to change their methods or their techniques of teaching. We tried to get them to understand and see around the school the danger or the disservice of erosion of the land in their particular area on the farms around the school. But they still taught about erosion in the West or Mid-West. I guess the books had pictures of the eroded land [of the West and Mid-West.]

Right around the schoolyard around the school, they didn't seem able to relate to the classes what was happening right there in their own area in protecting the top soil throughout.

So eventually, this program came to an end after a few years.

I hope, anyway, that some value was held onto in the area. But we didn't get too much of a response from the school systems. We provided a scholarship for a teacher, but they wouldn't take them. A few did, but most did not. I guess, they felt that they were working hard and they didn't want any new ideas. And we had the same problem with the farmers trying to get them to change their method of farming and to get some fertilizer to improve the soil and to increase their yield. Then to have diversified farming and possibly change to cattle raising and so on, but it was very difficult to do.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did the teachers have to do to take advantage of this? Did they have to contribute their summer time or did you have workshops?

MR DAVES: Yes, we had workshops and then I think some did attend and I think we checked on teaching the same way out of the textbooks and all.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you induce them to attend these summer workshops? Did you give compensation for it?

MR. DAVES: Conpensation, yes. We provided scholarship money and we paid their expenses while there.

DR. CRAWFORD: What sort of personnel did you secure to do this and what did they try to teach them?

MR. DAVES: Dr. Ivey had charge of this--Resources Education--and he would bring in experts and people from the different universities as well as from TVA. [He brought in] people like from the Agricultural Division and from the the Resource Division and Development and tried to get them to understand just

what TVA's interests were, and that they might be able to use this information. We had materials that we supplied them and so forth to improve, you might say, to make it more meaningful to children as well as to the community. But you'd be surprised how difficult it is to get people to change because teachers were taught in teacher training institutions and out of textbooks and largely in the four walls of the classroom and when they got back, they started teaching the same way. (Chuckle) It was difficult to get them to change.

[We wanted them]to take field trips to see just what was going on and I think a good bit of the opposition to that was past themselves. A lot of parents would write in and say, "I see my children are wasting a lot of time walking up and down away from school when they ought to be in school." I think that is the same old tradition that people say you can't get an education unless you are in the four walls. So we did try to encourage more field trips to have an understanding about what was going on and then the children to observe it and then not only observe it but have a discussion about how this could be corrected.

As a result we hoped possibly that some of it is still being carried out but we don't know to what extent. But we had to give that up because of a lack of appropriations from Congress.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did you have this workshop training program?

MR. DAVES: I think that was possibly just following World War II. Maybe 1950 to 1960--about ten years. Then it began to taper off. We don't have that type of program going now,

because you don't have much construction going now. We aren't building any more villages around the construction. Within 30 miles of commuting we do not do anymore.

DR. CRAWFORD: In what states did you establish these?

MR. DAVES: Kentucky and Alabama, and Tennessee were the chief ones, of course. We didn't have them in Virginia.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you do this only where you had construction?

MR. DAVES: Yes, that's right. Not the Resources Education. We carried it on in all the seven states because we would have those workshops and we would hold those in the country. We were not to bring them into central location either in Alabama, Tennessee and North Carolina and Kentucky.

After my work with the Resources Education--the Education Relations staff was disbanded and eliminated and I was given responsibility of Equal Employment Opportunity. As you know President Truman--from President Roosevelt to Truman to the present time--each one issued an executive order of nondiscrimination under federal employment. TVA came under that executive order and I was given the responsibility to head up the Equal Employment Opportunity program for TVA.

I was first placed in the office of the Director of Personnel. [The] Director of Personnel was given responsibility for this program. I worked under the direction of the Director of Personnel for possibly five or six years. My responsibility was to see as far as I could that nondiscrimination existed and that discrimination did not exist, and [to] inform him of promotion of minorities in the whole Tennessee Valley as far as the Authority

was concerned.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did you start the Equal Employment Opportunity work?

MR. DAVES: I would have to check to be positive, but I think around 1955 or '56 until 1963.

After the president issued an order that Equal Employment Opportunity program should not be in the Department of Personnel because that is where all the problems of discrimination were--in the Personnel Department. You shouldn't ask the Personnel Department to sit in as judge and jury on its own program. So the executive order was a mandate too to place the Equal Employment Opportunity responsibility on the Board of Directors of the TVA. Since the General Manager was in with the Board of Directors I was assigned to work as special assistant to the General Manager with the responsibility of conducting Equal Employment Opportunity program.

If any complaint came up from any of the areas of operation,it was my responsibility to review it and investigate and to make a report to the Board. If satisfactory adjustments were not made by the responsible person under whom the individual was working, then it was brought to the attention of the Board and the General Manager.

If the Board did not settle the grievance to the satisfaction of the individual, then the individual had a right to take an appeal to the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee in Washington.

We were sent all the material that we gathered in the invest-

igation of the situation to the committee and the committee had a staff. And they would either accept our conclusion or they would insist on further investigation and with dealing with the problem. If that did not work out satisfactorily with the employee, he had a right to take an appeal to the federal court. Very few cases went that far.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you have any idea how many did?

MR. DAVES: Yes, about two did, as I can recall, to the federal court. I can only recall one and it was the Sherry/Igo case which was quite long and lengthy and the federal court upheld us in their decision. I can't think of any other that went as far as the federal court.

Since TVA was, as you call it, chartered in the state of Alabama, all the cases had to go to Alabama.

DR. CRAWFORD: The northern judicial district was there, you mean?

MR. DAVES: All cases were settled there by Judge Johnson.

That was the extent of my work with TVA with exception that I represented TVA at all of the land grant colleges. And in those days, the Negro land grant colleges were not a part of the white land grant colleges. So they had their separate meetintgs even though they met at the same time and possibly the same city that the land grant colleges did. We had a contract with the Negro land grant colleges to prepare a research project in agriculture, along the lines of our interest in Resource Education. And this contract--the first one--was with the Tuskegee Institute. We used to meet there with all of the Negro land grant colleges and directors of agriculture. This was

all the time that I was with TVA.

There came a dissatisfaction of TVA's total agriculture program as it affected the Negro colleges. You see, TVA's fertilizer and agriculture program was largely carried out by the experiment stations. The Negro land grant colleges' agriculture department did not participate in the experiment stations so they were out of this research thing. So they made a contention to TVA that they ought to be a part of it. So that their students and teachers could have access to this information and participate in this report.

So on that we tried to get the white land grant colleges to include the negro into the extension stations since the negro schools did not have an experiment station. We never resolved that problem while I was at TVA.

Mr. McAmis was in that and Neil Bass was head of that. There was the time that we went to Chicago and I think Mr. Bass got cold feet and he didn't present TVA's side of it to the Negro land grant colleges. He asked, I forget the name, he was the man who was then head of the experiment station with the land grant colleges to present the thing to the Negro land grant colleges. Well, the Negro land grant college president resented it because they felt he was representing Auburn and he would not represent anyone in TVA. Mr. Gant, at that time, was General Manager and he hit the ceiling when he found out that Mr. Bass had not presented it.

So a few years after that incident, the Negro land grant colleges and their presidents and their agriculture departments

merged with the white land grant colleges and they met together and they are still meeting together. How much benefit the Negro land grant colleges are getting from the experiment stations that are set up, I don't know. But I still feel that they are not a part of it, even though TVA has spent a lot of money developing the experiment stations at the land grant colleges particularly TVA's interest in improving the soil and diversification.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was clearly a case of inequality. I think federal money was being spent in agriculture from the very beginning and all the way through. The Negro land grant colleges were excluded. Why did no one notice it before? Why were there no complaints for so long?

MR. DAVES They were complaining all along, but as you know, the Agriculture Department was hostile to TVA's agricultural program. This whole fertilizer program of TVA had to defend itself every year inside agriculture. And they have a powerful influence. And,of course, these southerners are chairmen of that agriculture committee.

DR. CRAWFORD: The chairman was nearly always a southerner.

MR. DAVES: Yes, (laughter) and because of the longevity. So I think TVA was reluctant to tackle the thing openly, hoping that they would get the thing land grant colleges and the folks together to do it without having to make a big fuss over it. I think that was the chief thing.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know when TVA first started trying to get the land grant colleges together?

MR. DAVES: I fought for that every time I went to a land grant

college meeting. The thing would come up and I would make my report to TVA and we tried to get TVA's Agricultural Division to take a positive stand on this thing. But Mr. McAmis wouldn't do it because he was so tied up with the Extension Service before he came to TVA. He had his connections. And then it would be referred to some individual who would be in Agriculture and they would all be former extension people and they weren't going to alienate those people. It just couldn't get off the ground.

We had a man in TVA who was the coordinator of this Extension Service in TVA and we never could get him to move on it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was the coordinator?

MR. DAVES: I'll have to add that for I'll have to find who that was because I don't remember. My wife says I don't remember things. But I remember definitely that he was reluctant to do anything about it. You see, TVA always tried to get the division or the department to resolve its problems itself with out coming to the Board. And we'd waste a lot of time trying to get an individual who was not in sympathy with it to move in on certain things which were unpopular with him even though TVA was supposed to do it. Now, they could have forced them to do it, but that was a last resort. So I don't think we ever got into the thing where we could get it for the Negro land grant colleges.

DR. CRAWFORD: Could you explain it a little bit further, Mr. Daves, about the TVA policy of getting things settled at different levels ?

MR. DAVES: Well, that had been quite a problem because as you

know, TVA had an overall policy of non-discrimination. Well, I don't know if you want me to get into this or not. I'd like to go on into this further--this discrimination thing--before I go further unless you have some questions you want to ask.

DR. CRAWFORD: No sir, follow the outline you wish to and we'll come back for whatever we need to.

MR. DAVES: TVA as a federal agency has to have a policy of non-discrimination in all of its activities. It had to be in whatever it was. It could not discriminate on the basis of race, religion or nationality whether it was in employment, as a program or part of its programs. It was difficult to get this done down at the grass roots where the action took place. So a lot of actions were taken not because TVA top level management were in sympathy with it, but in many instances they did not know about it because individuals did not make complaints because of fear it might jeopardize their jobs or whatever it was.

When TVA first started out in 1933, it had the same policy. But we had people carrying out this policy who were not in sympathy with it nor were they accustomed to disregard a system which had been existing in this area for a long time. So when TVA came in and accepted its first at Norris Dam, those who were reponsible at the grass roots level began to conduct the program just like it had been done in the South all along. They had separate drinking fountains--everything was separate--Negroes were (chuckle). . . . There was a separate cafeteria--which was expensive--separate toilet facilities, separate dormitories. Well, it

was a pattern that existed in the South.

Well, when I came in I brought this to the attention of the General Manager and the Director of Personnel. Of course, you have to go through lines of command. I was going through the Director of Personnel and General Manager. I suppose we discussed this thing for about two years. There was fear of public reaction. There was fear of employees' reaction especially labor unions. So there was a reluctance to tackle the problem.

So I wrote memorandums on it to the Director of Personnel and it got to the General Manager. I don't know if it ever got to the Board or not. Sometimes those things stop there and don't get to the Board. But I discussed it with the General Manager and he was saying we ought to do something about it, but let's discuss it. Well, it had been discussed all along and now I think we are going to have to take action. But it is always more difficult to undo something than it is not to start it in the beginning. Now, they have a habit of doing it, and they are satisfied with it and I think what turned the thing around was a lot of students had come in from the north, Columbia, Harvard and all, down to visit the TVA dam. They would make fun of the two different water fountains. "Let me taste this colored water and see how it tastes." Well, it got back to TVA and it got in the national pictures and then newspapers began to write it up. Then TVA wanted to do something about it.

So they finally got around to getting the General Manager to issue a memorandum stating that all facilities for TVA employees and the public should be integrated.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember what General Manager? Do you remember about when that was?

MR. DAVES: It was Mr. Gant--George Gant. I don't know where George is but he was with the Ford Foundation.

DR. CRAWFORD: He still is in Thailand.

MR. DAVES: Again, the responsibility went back on the local. Either the project manager or the superintendent of the Alabama works in the fertilizer and chemical plants. They had to issue--this was (chuckle) quite painful for some of them--of course, they had been used to it. The final was issued . I think I went to bed that night thinking that you are going to see a bomb explode and all the TVA works will be done for, but nothing happened.

So, I remember down in Alabama and Kentucky the same situation developed when the domitories were first opened and the houses were opened.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, was that on the TVA projects?

MR. DAVES: On the TVA projects. Then I think the chief area was to open up the cafeterias where they eat together. That was in the South as I suppose it was. (Chuckle) You can stand together and possibly not sit together all the time, but eating together was a part of the problem. So I was there the morning when that was done and the next morning. To ease the thing, Mr. Young, Director of the chemical plant in Alabama, we had one big cafeteria and we had a wing which Negroes would eat in and whites would eat over here. So Mr. Young said to ease this thing out, "Let's leave this wing over here. We'll issue the

order. So if the Negroes prefer going in there, they could still go in there, but we wouldn't insist on it. [They might go in] either through habit, or custom or tradition, they might go in there.(Chuckle) They did!

DR. CRAWFORD: How long did that continue?

MR. DAVES: It continued until they closed it up. I told them they were going to have to close it out that it wasn't going to work because here was a superviser and a superintendent eating over here and here is a guy who was a former laborer now he isn't going in there. He'd been conditioned that he shouldn't go. He is going to be in here. So they finally closed it out altogether and he had to go in there. Nothing happened!

Same thing was in Kentucky and the same thing was in Chattanooga. They didn't have a cafeteria, but they had toilet facilities things where the people worked. Nothing ever happened. It just worked. Labor didn't object to it--might have objected to it personally--a lot of whites did in the cafeteria and of course, a lot of Negroes stayed out because it was something unfamiliar to them. They were not accustomed to that type of thing. But after a while they'd stand off looking at all the whites going in and they came out the same complexion and it didn't bother them so the Negroes weren't thrown out so they went on and now you would think it had been going on for forty years.

So as for the two of them, the drinking fountains were all taken down. They had to change the bath houses. It was expensive in the first place. Of course, it is expensive all the time. But

the thing now is nobody thinks anything about it. And any new project going up, they didn't have those things. Nobody knew a different way.

DR. CRAWFORD: But seeing it was the result of a long struggle, wasn't it?

MR. DAVES: A long struggle. A very long struggle because, I think, TVA took the same attitude as industry coming South. That they were not going to upset the pattern which had been existing in the South as far as employment was concerned as far as facilities were concerned that we are not in here to change the social system of the South. So we are going to comply with what has happened all along. Which means that the Negroes would be denied equal opportunity in all facilities and as far as employment was concerned.

Now, the most glaring and continuous even after this had taken place--changing the facilities--was employment. Now we had an agreement with sixteen labor unions--craft unions--nondiscrimination because of federal projects. It was a good policy and I think TVA wanted to carry it out. There again, they had this contract with labor, but we couldn't get anybody in the Personnel Division to crack down on labor to carry it out.

As you know, TVA had quite a bit of opposition coming in here. Labor got this contract or agreement with TVA and it was quite a lucrative thing for them. TVA needed support of labor because the Congressional and power boys were pretty strong against TVA, particularly the power program. They wanted to keep the good will of labor unions so every year this thing would come up. TVA

was about the only agency in those days that had a policy of recognizing the unions. The union could bargain for wages. Others such as Civil Service had determined the wages for blue collar and white collar. But TVA set up its own policy of wages being determined by negotiations--both white collar as well as blue collar. Every year we would have these meetings and this thing would go on discussing about this matter of nondiscrimination.

The international unions which would readily agree with this policy and would sign the contract. But then the local union that had local autonomy had to comply with the national office. The national would not push them too much because they didn't want to lose their union. The only way they could get it done was to force them to do it and they may pull out like the machinists threatened to do. So they didn't want to go that far, but to try to leave it where TVA could work with the local group to carry it out.

For 25 years we were never able to get a Negro apprentice in TVA. Now TVA wanted it and Personnel of course was supposed to see it done, but they had it set up as: the apprenticeship is a program that is controlled by the Union and by Management. Unions would review the applicant. Management and the Unions would review them. If management approved them, and the union didn't approve them, they were never appointed.

As you know, and it is generally known throughout the country that the most difficult union to deal with is the construction unions and this was the construction union--sixteen of them--that

we had to deal with. We never had a Negro craftman because he had to belong to the union. TVA was not a closed shop, but in all practical purposes it was a closed shop because the common laborer couldn't get a job unless he came to the labor hall. Certainly an electrician, a boiler maker, iron worker, brick layer--whatever you did--had to come. If he were not a union man, if he didn't come up from the apprenticeship program, it was impossible for him to get on.

After the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee began to blow down on the necks of TVA that there were no Negro craftmen on the project, then we began to work out a scheme when it was already in existence, where we would have dual organization which was called--I think labor groups had a charter A and a charter B in certain of its crafts. Like the carpenters, for instance, accepted a Negro local. Well, that was true outside of TVA going to the same which was true.

Well TVA which was against its rules, in order to get some Negro carpenters on in this late development, we did accept the union's agreement that we put on a few Negro on the separate union charter. We got that done and that worked for a while. And that is about all they had of the craftsmen on because all were Negro carpenters. The excuse was that they had been working on houses and small buildings, but Negro carpenters never had the experience of heavy construction. It was true but it wasn't their fault because they just hadn't had the opportunity. So they were taken on in small groups. We never got Negro electricians, boiler makers, iron workers--I think they got some--well, we got some. Even if

you had one that belonged to a union, if he didn't belong to the local union, they could always say that they had men who need work and we haven't been able to place one on a job and we can't take a new man in who has a membership even though it is in Kansas City or wherever it is. The locals could keep them out that way. That would have been the most difficult problem TVA has had in breaking down this whole matter of discrimination in employment.

When I came in the mail room was handled by all white boys--white supervisors--delivering mail to all the different offices. I insisted that we had qualified Negroes that could do this sort of thing. So we started in to change that, but it had to be done gradually. Where we began to put Negroes in and then it became all Negro. Then we had a Negro supervisor which was still as against the whites. I told them that wouldn't do. And because they had Negro supervisors, they wanted to put whites in to work with the Negroes. Finally now the pressure came down from Washington that we were able to mix them, and they are mixed now, but it just happened recent years.

When I came in they didn't have a Negro. They had about 600 or more engineers. They had never had a negro engineer. I insisted on getting a Negro engineer. Well, we had a policy that they would not take an engineer from a engineering school unless the engineering school was accredited by its particular school. If it was architectural, if it was electrical or if it was mechanical or it was civil. Howard University was the only Negro school that had an accredited department. Of course, this has just happened recently. We discussed it with the General Manager,

with the supervisor of the unit to employ a Negro engineer. One supervisor said,"You can bring them in and I'll quit. Most of the engineers we've got here are southern boys from southern schools and they will not work with them." That frightened most of them.

So I said the thing we ought to do is bring them in because we are going to have to do it and see what happens. Then they said don't just bring in one, bring in several. I went out to Howard and we recruited them, we left applications and we were able to get twelve. I think six or eight came in at once. It was something new. These weren't lay people; these were college people. Nothing ever happened. They came in and there was some aloofness possibly and they had to look around at each other and evaluate each other. Nobody left and the thing worked out so well and they were competent and they did such a good job. The man said if you can get me some like this, I'd like to have them.

DR. CRAWFORD: About what year did this take place?

MR. DAVES: If I am not mistaken, it was just after World War II. I'll have to get the exact date. But it was along in there when the pressure by the government was to use the Negro professional people. So ever since then, we have had Negro engineers. I understand there are a good many of those left TVA not because of the working conditions but because of housing conditions. They couldn't find decent housing conditions in Knoxville. The most of them were from the east and they hadn't been accustomed to this type of living in the South. So they stayed here two or three years and as they gradually got better jobs with the aircraft company or Dayton and other places, they left and

went to those jobs, but we still brought in additional people.

Other agencies probably began to look for Negroes because they had government contracts. Then it made it very difficult for us to recruit them to come south to get jobs. Possibly other places could pay a little more than TVA could pay. We still have not more than one or two in Knoxville. There's some in Chattanooga and I think one or two in Alabama, but not as many as we had once when we had about twelve.

Those are some of the problems that TVA had to work with. TVA wanted to do it. They had the policy set up that they could do it, but its policy was to force action in the area that it is supposed to take place and it took a long time to get those things through. I think TVA didn't want to say,"Let's force it against the wishes and it might not work, but educate them and get them to agree to it." That would work better than to say that it is going to be done and not say much about it and it was done and nothing happened.

Now we are getting Negro apprentices on since I left. So I was talking to a young man over there and he said you paved the way for what is going on. And I am glad for what is going on. I didn't pave the way. Washington forced them to do it and forced the unions to do it. Well, it is still token. They'll do it here and there to get one or two in. It is difficult to get them in because not only in TVA but all through the South and all through the North it is difficult to get the construction union to take Negroes in. They are trying to force it now, but it hasn't been too successful at doing it.

Apprenticeship has been a closed shop--a family thing. And it is difficult for whites to get in if you don't have a relative or somebody in the union. And apprentices want to work so we have had that problem through TVA.

DR. CRAWFORD: Part of the problem has been administrative, hasn't it?

MR. DAVES: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: It seems to have been the problem of insisting that everything take place at the grass roots level and that it be done by local institutions, agencies if possible, and by the lowest levels of TVA administratively. And only then do you get any centralized control and you absolutely can't get it done otherwise. It seems to me that should have given TVA some strength in some ways. But also it has held up any real change.

MR. DAVES: Well, you see, I don't think it ever got to the Board with the particular problems--The Board and General Manager. The General Manager is sort of a buffer for the Board. If he could get the thing solved without coming to the Board let's do it. And don't take anything to the Board that cannot be resolved.

DR. CRAWFORD: There are several buffers under the General Manager.

MR. DAVES: Yes, that is true. Personnel was anxious to have a good record with dealing with labor. Now they had some men who were in the apprenticeship program and in other programs in labor and in personnel and placement who did not want to rub labor the wrong way because it would give them a poor

standing with TVA. They could complain that this guy was trying to push something on us, you see, and he doesn't understand the problems. That made them somewhat reluctant to take a firm stand and I would go down and give them the authority. I would tell them that they were representing me and I want it done. I would say to them, if you would send a memorandum down there and say what you want done and it has got to be done and then we can work it out. Otherwise, it is not going to be worked out.

I went all around to all of the additions and told them what the policy was and what they had planned to do and talked to Mr. Wessenaur who was head of Power and Mr. Leonard who was head of Design. They would listen, but they hadn't gotten specific word from the Board or from the General Manager that this is to be done. When I got done speaking he got all of his division chiefs in and when I got through speaking he never said, "I want this done because this is what TVA wants." Therefore it never got done!

I remember a case that came up for an apprentice. There were three Negroes and three whites. We didn't have any Civil Service Act to take it off an application where you could tell where it was black or white you know. They didn't have a picture on it, where at first you had your picture on it. That was an easy way to pass that you didn't want to meet him. He'd left an individual to select one. The labor representative selected three--two Negroes and one was White. Then Personnel said, you know that two of these are Negroes. Well, now we don't need them. Well, it came back to Mr.[Harry] Case. And he said, "Well, all right they

won't get in until they take those two Negroes." They never took them.

But you see they could still have another meeting and Mr. Case would never know about this and they would still take him on.

But now they have to do it because Civil Service is breathing down their neck and will force them to do it.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was force. They did not do it willingly.

MR. DAVES: Well, yes it was forced on the locals to do it.

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THE PROJECT IS "AN ORAL HISTORY OF TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY." THE DATE IS FEBRUARY 13, 1971. THE PLACE IS KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. J. HERMAN DAVES. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY BETTY WILLIAMS. INTERVIEW II.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Daves, I want to ask some questions about the details of the various things we talked about before. And I think it would be interesting for the record to have some more information about the instructors that you used on the construction projects. I'd like to get some more details about the work you did to educate the people on this construction project. I believe it was never in Knoxville, in the early phase, but where you had construction going on. I'd like to get some information about where that took place and what you tried to accomplish and where you recruited your personnel and some of the difficulties you encountered as you did this on the different construction sites.

MR. DAVES: Now, before I came with TVA, this type of thing was going on at Wilson Dam in Alabama and this was the first stage of TVA's development. They took over Wilson Dam.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year did you start work with TVA?

MR. DAVES: January 1, 1939. When I came in, Dr. J. Max Bond had the position that I assumed. He left TVA and went back to school. At Wilson Dam we had a Negro employment officer who dealt with interviewing only the Negro. We had a

recreation director and we had a village there in which Negroes who worked for TVA lived just out from Florence, Alabama--between Florence and Sheffield. Well, they had a little community center. These people were college graduates. We had two people in employment who interviewed Negroes. We had one person who was in charge of recreation facilities there. We did not have a separate school there because we were so close to the schools in Florence, Alabama, and most of the employees lived outside of the village anyway and their children went to the regular public schools and those who lived in the village went to public schools.

But the men who were employed in these positions were college trained people. They did a good job. My work was to see that they did carry out this program to get reports each month from the employment office who worked in the community. Now, this same type of thing was at the Kentucky Dam, but the only difference was that they had a school. We employed a teacher who was a highly qualified person with a master's degree. Unfortunately, we only had one teacher who had to teach all grades in the school, but anyway it was a small school and not too many children there so she could do it very well.

Now, the high school kids in Paducah could easily be transported to a high school in a nearby town, but the elementary children were taken care of in the school system there that we had. We had a recreation director there and we also had an employment officer who was a college trained person with a master's degree.

At Fontana Dam we had the same type of situation there only

on a much larger scale because it was isolated from any town so we had to have not only a school and recreation center and had movies and other activities for employees. We had that at Paducah, but they could go into Paducah for amusement because it wasn't too far from town.

At the dam in Jefferson City, we had the same type of situation. We had the Holston Dam and we also had it at Lenoir City with a chief employment officer and recreation person, but didn't have a school because they were close enough to a public school.

Watts Bar was kind of isolated, so we had a school and recreation man and we had employment officer that interviewed Negroes and would certify them for employment. At the time, except at Wilson Dam, they were common laborers, custodial workers. We didn't have any white collar workers except these two or three people we had like a teacher and employment officer and so on.

The same thing was true in Knoxville. We didn't have a single Negro clerk/typist or personnel worker. We didn't have any employment officer. The central office had no professional people, except engineers but the situation is different now.

DR. CRAWFORD: At the time that you left TVA, do you have an estimate of the percentage of Negro employees?

MR. DAVES: No, but I am sure it has grown because of the opening up of some of these areas that we didn't have then. For instance, now we have clerk/typists in Knoxville and in Chattanooga and Wilson Dam which I never thought of. In

personnel now we have them in other areas of the plant. We also have engineering aides and engineers and file clerks and we never had these before. They were recruited from the mail rooms which became a recruiting grounds for a Negro employed in a white collar job employed in other branches and divisions of TVA at that time. But now they are recruited outside of that because they have more recruitment than in the mail room. We still have Negroes in the mail room and we still have some whites. We have Negroes as clerk/typists and still have them as clerks.

Anyway, during the last few years that I was with TVA we tried to build up a register of qualified technical Negro people. So I would go around to the Negro colleges and we had a educational personnel branch person who was supposed to visit all the colleges--White and Negro--and try to book a register of qualified people so we could interview them when the needs came for them. Apparently he was not successful in the Negro colleges. So we set up a different program for them. I would go around to the Negro colleges and interview and was trying to get an economist or an engineer or if you wanted to build up the register for a clerk/typist or some other professional person--lawyer.

Then I would go around to the Negro schools and try to get a list of people--the graduates-- who would be interested in coming to TVA. Now, I understand that Mr. Gholson at Wilson Dam does that largely and Mr. Tyler before he left TVA--and he passed away just recently--used to do that type of thing, and to the Negro schools who had engineering departments. We reduced somewhat the the high standard that we had for Negro engineers. We tried to

establish a cooperative relationship between the Negro engineering schools where they would come into TVA and work during the summer months and see what it was all about and then go back to the university and graduate. Then they might fit into TVA's program.

We also tried to get some Negro teachers in the Negro engineering schools to come and pay them a stipend to work during the summer months. They'll be better prepared to know and emphasize what TVA is interested in the engineers. I think that is working out pretty well now.

Oak Ridge is doing the same thing and I think TVA was responsible a good bit for them becoming interested in bringing in the Negro engineer's teachers of the schools into seminars at Oak Ridge so that they could know what the demands were in this area. So that has been one of the good recruiting programs that we have had at TVA. I think it has paid off. Where I was the only one doing all of this, now the man that has succeeded me--rather let me go back. It isn't the man who succeeded me, because he was white and he stayed in for a while and he retired and now they have a Negro, well qualified, a Mr. White who has a staff of five or six people doing this equal employment opportunity thing. They are working with it throughout TVA even though they have a few projects when I was in that he is supposed to be doing a very good job of settling and trying to anticipate, I suppose, grievances or problems that could possibly be discrimination and resolve them through his help.

I think this has been brought about through the decentralizing from Washington to Atlanta of the Civil Service

Commission now asking for a report and checking up on how many Negroes are being employed in certain areas.

Now, the great difficulty that TVA went up against when I was there and that meant the same thing now is getting qualified Negroes to apply to TVA for some of these jobs. The competition is so keen now. So many companies are trying to get the same people. You don't have too many Negroes that are going into the technical field. Most of them are going to liberal arts or into possibly medicine or law and they don't want to get tied up into an agency like this. A lot of them want out. A lot of them are going into the civil rights movement. A lot of the schools have discouraged them from applying here. I had difficulty with Howard getting the things that could be used to better serve the Negro to go out into general practice and to identify them with some law firms.

DR. CRAWFORD: It is a different market, isn't it after being so long when there was nothing.

MR. DAVES: That's right. That same thing is true with engineers. Oh, for a long time nobody would take a Negro. Now, they will get them. So now TVA has a hard time because they are paying more. I don't know if a lot of these folks cutting down--the aircraft folks--it may be an abundance of them trying to find jobs anywhere--people in the scientific field.

That is the situation. It is much better now. I think TVA is one of the best agencies in the South--federal agencies in the South. I don't think there has been too much change in some other agencies that employ Negroes. That may have changed, but I know

at one time the other federal agencies had not gone as far as TVA had even though with its handicaps.

DR. CRAWFORD: TVA seems to have gone fairly far in theory at an early point with the implementation.

MR. DAVES: That's right. It is interesting to know that the public expects TVA to, and is constantly pushing TVA to do more, but they did not push these other public agencies. I guess they had them so long like the FBI and the Post Office and Agricultural Department they had no Negroes at all and nobody pushed those.

DR. CRAWFORD: I believe that people expect TVA to be more innovative.

MR. DAVES: That's right and they do that. We wonder sometimes why we have to and not the other agencies. I think that has helped TVA to come along with it. I think TVA's policy is good, but you had human beings getting out those policies whose background was quite different from what it should have been. Now, I think through education and largely the force of the federal government there is coming a time when it is going be hard to find people to fill these positions.

We tried to find a lawyer for quite a while--Negro lawyer--I know Mr. Swidler, who went to Washington with the Federal Power Board, wanted me to get a Negro lawyer. But the standards were so high. They wouldn't take a lawyer, White or Negro, unless he was on the editorial board of the Law Review. Well, now Howard University didn't have a Law Review. And that's where most Negro lawyers came from. Those who came from Yale, Harvard, of course,

they were waiting for some of those judge's lawsuits and they wouldn't come to TVA. So I don't think we ever got a lawyer in TVA. We may have now, I am not sure. We tried.

Well, whether they have lowered the standards, I don't know. All the lawyers had to be because most of their cases were not in the courts--it was through writing opinions. What is it these lawyers have to write?

DR. CRAWFORD: Briefs.

MR. DAVES: Briefs and that type of thing. So that's why they wanted a guy who was on the editorial board or Law Review Board or a magazine would at least have experience in writing.

DR. CRAWFORD: In regard to the grievances and complaints you handled, what sort did you receive?

MR. DAVES: Mostly from Negroes who felt they were not given the job that they applied for or they were not promoted on the basis of merit and efficiency which was our policy. Now, that was quite a ticklish thing to do because the personnel man who did the placement or the division chief who did the acceptance of the person, you see, they sent around applications. Now, if he were not sold on trying to place a Negro in a position, he could always find a qualified white person, you see. Now, that is a difficult thing to fight because here is a fellow who is equally qualified, as far as academic work is concerned, but his experience has been limited because the Negro didn't have a chance in there so, you see, unless he (the employer) had a definite interest in getting a Negro he would pass him over easily because

he could do it. And he could say, "Look, this fellow is better qualified. He has had more experience. The Negro is qualified as far as academics is concerned, but he has never had any experience. I need a man who has had experience." How are you going to fight that! When you say "merit and efficiency" is the thing so a lot of Negroes have been cut out of that.

The same thing is true when you begin to select a person for an apprenticeship. The Negro may make a higher mark on his apprenticeship task, but here's a boy whose uncle or friend has had a shop and he has been able to work with him in this shop or on some jobs where the Negro has never had that experience. So when it comes time to select him, the labor man says, "Well, look, this fellow here has had some experience in the electrical field or the auto mechanic field or in the plumbing or whatever. And he has not had any." The point is, are you willing to give him the chance if he is potentially qualified. If he isn't, then you can keep him out. So that has been the difficulty we have had all along. They have to do the selecting rather than the Personnel Department.

So if here comes a man who says, "I need an engineer or I need an economist." We would recruit an economist, a fellow who has gone through school and has a master's degree in economics, but the type of work you want him to do here may be in power and he has not had the experience that the other fellow has had even though he is better qualified academically. So you see, if you want to get around it, you can always do it. If we have two people equally qualified--Negro and a White--it depends upon the

supervisor. You see he has a lot of latitude. If he says, "No." and you say this man here is better qualified, he may say, "Hold up on this awhile. Let me think over this thing." He (the Negro's name) may not come up any more. Then, when it does come up, and he wants the Negro, then the Negro has found a job somewhere else. He's no longer available. So I guess he sleeps better at night.

(chuckle) Those are some of the problems.

The thing that I ran up against more than anything else--some of the lower personnel people who were afraid to take a stand for fear they might jeopardize their job--that they spend 90% of the time finding out why they can't employ this fellow instead of finding out why they should employ him. I've talked to them about that, but it is so much easier to evade stepping out unless the thing is forced upon you that you have to do it. But if he is able to decide for himself or his supervisor, you'll never get it done. He can always find a reason why he shouldn't, but not a reason why he should. That's been the whole problem when you leave it down to the lower ranks to make the decision on acceptance.

Now, when it comes to getting rid of a person, that was a different story. He had to defend it. Because TVA had a rule that you could not fire a person like the old days when you say, "If you can't do your work, get on out and get your check or your money." You can't do that anymore. So when he dismisses a person, if the person feels that he has been wrongly treated, he can bring a grievance against a supervisor. Well, they don't want that.

Because many of them have been forced to take them back because they didn't have a good reason for doing it. But taking them on is a different story.

Way down here in Kentucky a superviser can make a decision that will not get back to Knoxville unless the person makes a grievance. Many of them don't want to go to the trouble. If he doesn't want me to, it is no use in my trying because I will have difficulty with them when I get on the job and that type of thing. So we don't push it. They select somebody else and you never know.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you deal with these grievance cases?

MR. DAVES: Well, when I got a grievance case, they would have to write a letter to me as the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer. Then, I would go to if it was Wilson Dam, or Kentucky or Knoxville, then I would have to interview the person and get his side and then management and get his side. Then, I would try to evaluate just what the story is. If it was a case where the person felt he had been discriminated against because he did not get the job, then I have to view his application. If it was a job where he had to take a test, for instance, the apprenticeship test. We also gave a good many more tests in the beginning--these technical people. I had to view his situation over against the applicants that he had. Then I had to try to come to a conclusion if I thought the person here was better qualified than that person. But suppose he says he wants a person who has had experience in this area and this person doesn't have it. Then, I don't have a leg to stand on unless we want to open

the way for Negroes to get in. We would have to make some exceptions so that we can do that. If he doesn't want to do it, then they are going to leave it to the supervisor to select his own person he wants to work with.

Now, it comes to a clerk/typist and that is another gray line which we have to deal with. All of them have to take a test. A lot of Negroes students had no chance to go to a business college. All they had done was in high school and a lot of it was not a very good course. They come in to compete with a girl. She may pass the typing test. She can type 40-60 words a minute with a few mistakes. When it comes to spelling and sentence structure she will fall down. Then, they will take the girl who has had this experience and worked in an office before. Which means that the competition is too keen and she will not get in.

Now, the situation is better and Negroes are allowed to go to business colleges and universities and Knoxville College which didn't have any business courses before or they couldn't go to universities. Now, they are taking more in because they can pass the test through good training and they have worked in these places now and have experience and come back to TVA. But that was a problem there.

The same thing was true with a grievance for not promoting a guy. That's always a difficult problem to deal with. You see we are supposed to promote a fellow who works in a situation if he has seniority. [It was] all right in the early days when you take Negroes in to apply who had only a third grade education. Now the work developes so that it requires additional education to master

the job above or above that. So when it comes to promotion because they hired these fellows in the early days who were almost illiterate yet they could do the physical phase of the job. But over here it is going to require a little more education. They don't have it. What are you going to do in that situation? Yet you employ some whites who have maybe a better education since those guys have been there for years. What are you going to do? We have so much of that particularly at Wilson Dam and the chemical plant where they have worked for years and years in the plant. They hired them back in the beginning and they never did improve their education in the plant, but they could do the physical work.This work didn't require too much education but when there was a promotion over here at a machine where they have to use a little math and so forth, then you see, they are stuck.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did your training program for adults deal with that problem in any way?

MR. DAVES: Yes, we tried to deal with that problem, but there again, we couldn't give it to them on the TVA time. It is a difficult thing to say we are going to give this course in the evening after work hours to get them to come to it. They just won't do it. White or Negro. They just won't come. Only those who are at the point where they feel by getting something else they can go into a higher bracket. These folk have never had anything but common labor work or just work that doesn't require much education and to say that we are going to offer a course in the evenings only one or two will come. They always have something else to do or they have a moonlighting job or something

to get additional money. They are low paid and they have a family and they can't give up any time to come to school. We tried it over the years and are still trying it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which is the part of your work that you feel now was most effective with TVA?

MR. DAVES: I think the work that was most effective with TVA was to try to get TVA to see the importance of preventing grievances, both employment and promotion, by training the personnel people or their supervisory people to see what TVA's objectives are and that they are a part of TVA and for TVA to succeed they are going to have to change and fall into line with it. I think if I could ever get that point over, but I don't think that I could do it alone. I think quite a few grievances came up and got to Washington and somehow they were forced to bring pressure on TVA because I think TVA had had a name throughout the nation of being a democratic institution. In light of Civil Service--and I think Civil Service was rather anxious to get some on TVA--so with the pressure from Washington and with the realization that if TVA was going to hold its image, it was going to have to improve its employment and so forth. Because they were having a problem with the Negro group within as well as from the outside. The wonderful thing is that all those things worked out. I think they did a pretty good job of it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Can you sum up something about the case that went on to Federal Court?

MR. DAVES: That case was a long drawn out case. As I said, we had a hearing here in TVA. I went to Alabama

and interviewed the man and the supervisory personnel. I came to the conclusion that this was a promotion job. That the fellow was not qualified for the job both from an emotional standpoint as well as from training and his work record was poor. Well, he appealed and it went to the Washington committee and they looked at it and they upheld us in this. He didn't accept that. He took an appeal to the court.

Mr. Siever, the lawyer for TVA, and I went down and we had a hearing. Mr.Johnson upheld our decision on it. He still didn't accept that so when I left, this was a case of a fellow who was a clerk in one of the units. He tried to put it on the fact that it was because of his nationality--he was Italian--but that wasn't it at all. He had a very poor record. He was emotionally disturbed. He couldn't get along with anybody. So when it came to the point of selecting a person for promotion, it was a young woman who had a better work record. The fellow was quite qualified when it came down to typing. He could do that. He just couldn't get along with people. Nobody wanted him. You'd try to transfer him and nobody would take him. So he felt he was being discriminated against. Finally, it ended up of not having a case in Federal Court. I talked to Mr. Siever about it recently and he said, as far as he knew, the fellow was going to take another appeal to another court, but he never did. I don't know what happened to the case.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you notice much improvement in the situation of Negro employees in TVA before the '54 Supreme Court decision? Did it seem to change sharply after that?

MR. DAVES: Supreme Court decision of '54? Was that the education decision? That didn't have much effect on TVA. But the thing that had effect on TVA was the continuous evaluation of TVA's employment--not policy--but actual employment procedures. You see, we had to make reports to the Fair Employment Committee after the percentage of Negroes in different areas. But all the time it was down in the lower grades and the scatter and higher grades were very slow and it was very embarrassing to TVA and I think they wanted to do something about it. I think that brought about more change than anything else. They hated to send these reports to Washington which they periodically asked for to see how many Negroes--not the total percentage of Negroes--but what is the scatter and invariably they were found down in the Grade I or which is called the common labor job.

Now, we fought the percentage thing. Mr. Clapp and some felt that we ought to have at least 10% Negro. I fought that. You could easily get that 10%, but they would all be clustered in the lower grades. Which they were! So they decided not to do that. We tried to work to get as many people as we could get scattered into the various grades in TVA at the time.

I think that has been improved tremendously in recent years. There again, I think the climate is reponsible for that. Because other Supreme Court decisions and this whole matter of non-discrimination and civil rights and laws passed, all those things have had an effect on TVA which we have been inclined to keep our image of being a good institution and I think we have put forth a definite effort to find qualified Negroes and place them in higher

positions.

DR. CRAWFORD: It seems to me that one of the greatest obstacles to ending discrimination against Negroes in TVA was the unions.

MR. DAVES: It is still and throughout the United States. Construction unions have been very difficult to break. You see, TVA has been chiefly responsible for unions being recognized in the South. When they started out, there was quite a bit of opposition to that on the basis of that they worked for a union. Around Knoxville and Tennessee and Kentucky and around, TVA was almost an anathema to construction people. Not only did they recognize unions, but unions had a privilege of bargaining every year for increased wages. Well, the policy of TVA is that TVA would pay the prevailing wage that is paid to a construction people--a brick layer or whatever he is, his craft--the prevailing wage that he would be paid. In Tennessee the wage may be below that, but in Kentucky and Alabama or some other place that when you edge it out, TVA had to pay the prevailing wage even though in Knoxville the construction people said, "You are ruining us because we don't pay brick layers. Yes, why don't you pay what Nashville is, but Nashville pays them more, Louisville is paying more." We couldn't do that! We would have all our employees rushing to Nashville. We can't pay a differential wage to our employees who are working for TVA in Kentucky or Alabama or Nashville or Memphis than what we pay in Knoxville. We would have an awful problem.

So, if that is the prevailing wage, even though it isn't in

Knoxville, we have to pay it. Well, that upsets the wage scale in Knoxville, Knox County or East Tennessee. So the union responsible for that will come and bargain for increases and TVA will examine people throughout the whole area in which we operate and will come back and say, "Yes, we have to pay them that." Then construction folks in Knoxville are going to have to pay their labor the same way to keep them. So that's why I think it is they have been able to profit from their contracts in relationship with TVA.

Not only would they have TVA's employees but they have employees throughout the Valley who happen to be members of their union even though they are under TVA. The cost again of good wages they want to protect that for their members. In order to protect their members they've got to keep their members limited. And so they are going to make it very difficult to increase the number of craftsmen and force them to come through the apprenticeship program.

So then you have five apprentices, so many journeymen, and it would take an apprentice four or five years to get to be a journeyman.

DR. CRAWFORD: It is very hard to get into the apprenticeship program.

MR. DAVES: Very hard. It is all over the United States that it is very difficult. That's a problem now that we have with the apprenticeship program. Negroes are complaining that they cannot become skilled craftsmen. They can't get in the apprenticeship program. Now, they have opened up just a little

bit. They will take one here and there a little bit.

DR. CRAWFORD: But you are still finding it easier, aren't you to get Negroes in other positions in TVA?

MR. DAVES: Oh yes. Construction is a different problem. White collar job, professional jobs, technical jobs we can get them in because they don't have the restricted union organization like they do in the craft union. It is very difficult. The most difficult area to break into is the craft union.

DR. CRAWFORD: In your own work for TVA in having to travel around the area, did you have difficulty in accommodations and travel yourself?

MR. DAVES: Oh boy! When I first came with TVA I couldn't go to a hotel, I couldn't go to a motel. If I am going to Wilson Dam or to Nashville, we had rail service to Nashville at night and would always get a Pullman and would get off at Sheffield about three o'clock in the morning. I couldn't go to a hotel. I had to have a Negro home that I had contacted and I let them know I was coming and they had to let me in the house at three o'clock in the morning.

I would pick out a lower berth and the guy wouldn't give me a lower berth. He knew I was with TVA so he would give me a whole suite for $7.00. I would have three beds in there and a toilet and everything. He'd give me that which would cost somebody else $13 or $14. Well, that was broken down before I left. The hotels and motels were not so I never did get a chance to get into that area until just recently--since the Supreme Court's decision. I

work at Oak Ridge TAT and I travel for them.

DR. CRAWFORD: It has changed a great deal recently, hasn't it?

MR. DAVES: I never thought I would live to see the changes that are going on now. It did change on the railroads before I left. I guess they had to do it because it was too expensive to give one Negro a drawing room. That was broken down before I left.

I remember I got off at Atlanta and Dr. Clemons was President of Atlanta University, and we got off together. A white lady got off ahead of us and she looked back and saw Clemons coming and looked back and said, "What is the world coming to!" It was a Negro getting out of the Pullman car. He just laughed and I laughed.

Dining car--I used to go hungry because I would not eat behind the curtain that they had as special seats they had for Negroes. They would pull the curtain down which was quite embarrassing. You could eat back there, but with the rest, so I wouldn't go. I'd wait until I got somewhere to get something to eat. So that's broken down before I left. Yes, I had quite a bit of that and all the rest of the Negroes. Taverns, hotels and motels and I went to Atlanta and I couldn't get a cab. They had Negro cabs for Negroes and White cabs for Whites.

(This is off the record, you understand)

I went to Dr. Clemons' house one night for dinner and Dr. Cartwright from Columbia University was there and another man whose name I have forgotten from TVA was there. Dr. Cartwright had to catch a train. He wanted to go to the station and Dr.

Clemons didn't want to leave his guests. He couldn't call a White cab. They wouldn't come into a Negro community. He couldn't call a Negro cab because they couldn't ride a White man. So he (Dr. Clemons) had to leave the dinner and take Dr. Cartwright to the station.(Laughter) That was the kind of silly foolishness! I suppose that has been done away with too.

DR. CRAWFORD: A great deal of change.

MR. DAVES: In such a short period of time. And nothing--the world didn't blow up. But you see, my contention has been all along that if you expose people to change and let them come in contact with people, it may not be as difficult as they thought it was going to be. But as long as we kept the barriers and said it couldn't be done because this person will not act favorably to it, it would never be done. That's why I said in TVA if they would bring in the engineers, then we could deal with the reaction if somebody didn't want to work with them. Then we could deal with that person. But as long as we held off saying that the folks would not work with them, then we'll never get them in. But we never had any problem. I think they were disappointed.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you were proven right.

MR. DAVES: They were disappointed when they made this radical change of bringing them in and the radical change of doing away with segregated facilities. I really thought some thought we would have quite a bit of disturbance in TVA when we brought that about, but we didn't. I know that people didn't like it--they didn't like it but there was no organized opposition to it. They didn't go along with it for a while, but that didn't

disturb the change.

In the past ten years--less than ten years--the Supreme Court began to operate in the interest of human beings rather than property rights. I never liked the Supreme Court. Some people think it is Communistic, but I think they did a great service to the whole human being because once you bring about this change and begin to accept the person as a person, it not only helps the Negro, it helps the other person also.

DR. CRAWFORD: And this change would never have come about without federal intervention in the local affairs.

MR. DAVES: And yet we don't want the federal government to intervene unless they are going to give us money. You see, the thing that interests me is to see all these mayors and governors going up to Congress begging for this money to be given to them. Of course, they still have the same old theory--don't put any strings on it--let us handle it. And yet on the other hand they said we want the federal government out of our local affairs that we handle. Now, when it comes to money, we want it. Change is coming about and it may be a great help to all of us.

DR. CRAWFORD: But it was a long time and that change was very slow.